image
5
JULY
YOU'LL DO BAD THINGS
BOSS
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YOU'LL DO BAD THINGS

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TINY ONION

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BBRRRZZZZZZ
BBRRRZZZZZZ

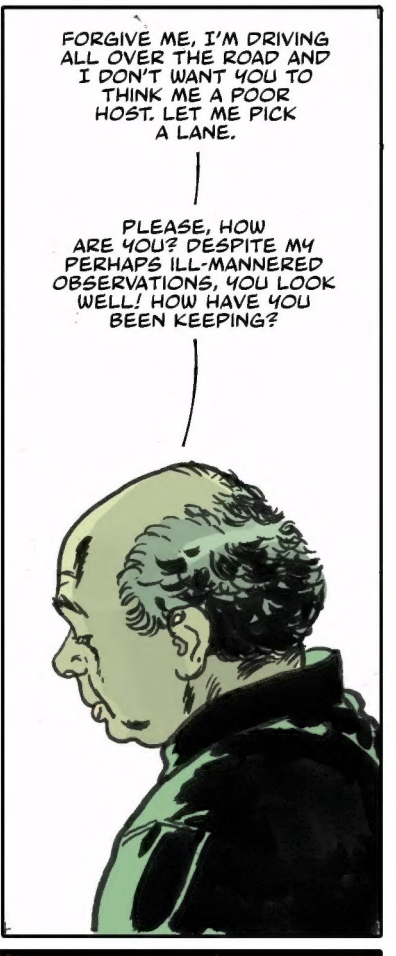
FIVE

KNOCK KNOCK
CLICK
YOU'RE GRAVING.

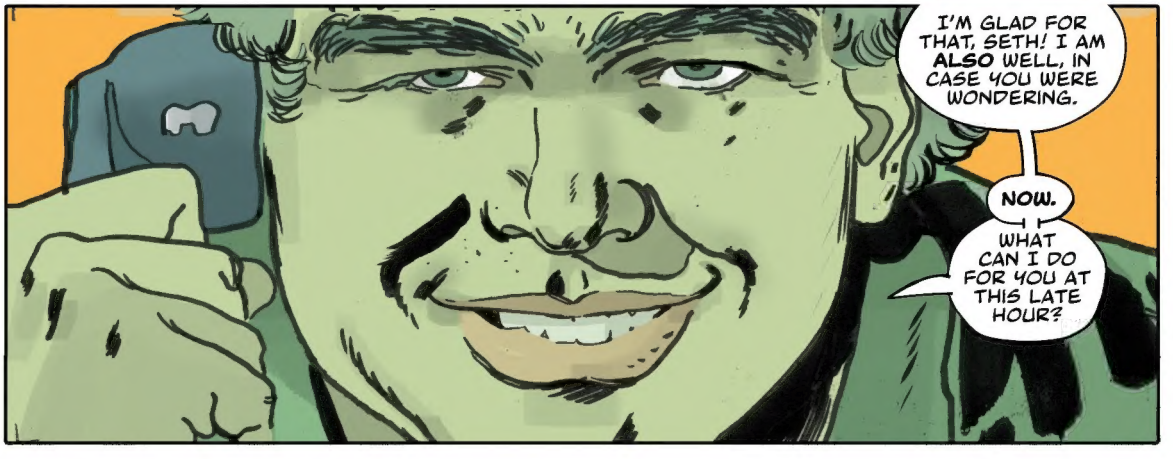
Excuse me?
APOLOGIES!
YOU CAN FORGET YOUR MANNERS IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, AND WHILE IT **IS A RUDE THING** TO SAY, IT JUST SHOCKED ME SLIGHTLY. LOGICALLY IT SHOULDN'T. WHY **WOULD** YOU LOOK THE EXACT SAME AS YOUR PICTURE ON OUR COVER?
I MEAN, *hell*, LOOK AT **ME!**
WHEN **OUR** BOOK CAME OUT, GOODNESS KNOWS I STILL HAD A FEW MEN LEFT FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT.
YOU LOOK **WELL**, THOUGH! A COUPLE MORE WRINKLES, SOME SPOTS HERE AND THERE. DIGNIFIED.
I SUPPOSE IT'S YOUR **VOICE** THAT'S MOST THROWING ME.
MY **VOICE?**
YES, NOT AT ALL HOW I THOUGHT YOU'D SOUND. IT'S NOT DISSIMILAR TO THE SENSATION OF HEARING ONE'S OWN VOICE OVER THE ANSWERING MACHINE AND THINKING, "*Oh*, **THAT'S** WHAT I SOUND LIKE?"
DREADFUL FEELING.
I'M SORRY I'M NOT WHAT YOU THOUGHT I WOULD BE.

Oh, NOW, NONE OF THAT. I DON'T MEAN IT AS A **CRITICISM.** WE SPEND SO MUCH TIME ALONE, YOU AND I, AND AFTER ALL WE'VE DONE TOGETHER--
--IT'S JUST A SLIGHT SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM WHEN THE VOICE IN YOUR HEAD DOESN'T MATCH WHAT'S SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU.

IT'S LIKE GOING TO SEE A MOVIE ADAPTATION OF A BOOK YOU ADORE AND THE ACTOR CAST AS YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTER DOESN'T LINE UP WITH THE PICTURE YOU'VE PAINTED IN YOUR HEAD. NOT AN INDICTMENT OF TALENT, BUT...
...well. IT CAN CERTAINLY BE A **SURPRISE.**

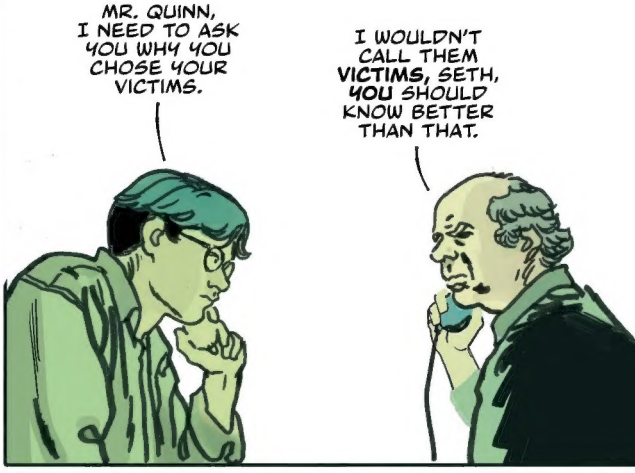

FORGIVE ME, I'M DRIVING ALL OVER THE ROAD AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK ME A POOR HOST. LET ME PICK A LANE.
PLEASE, HOW ARE YOU? DESPITE MY PERHAPS ILL-MANNERED OBSERVATIONS, YOU LOOK WELL! HOW HAVE YOU BEEN KEEPING?

I'M **FINE,** MR. QUINN.

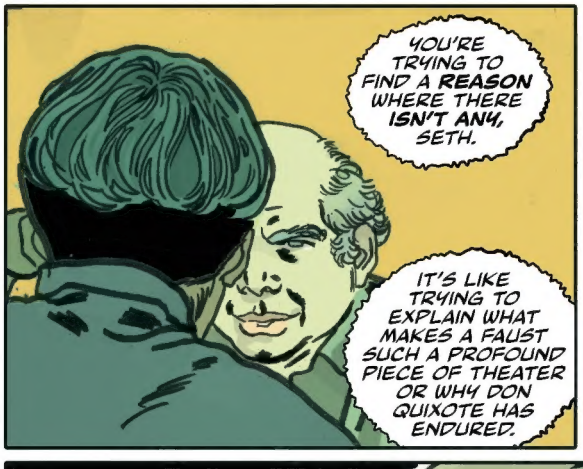

I'M GLAD FOR THAT, SETH! I AM **ALSO** WELL, IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING.
NOW.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU AT THIS LATE HOUR?

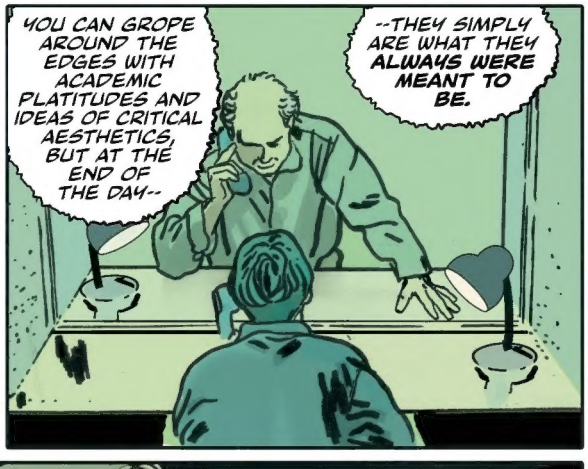
I GUESS...
...I GUESS, I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS I THOUGHT **YOU** MIGHT HAVE THE **ANSWERS** TO.
YOU MEAN EVEN AFTER 379 PAGES, YOU STILL HAVE THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME? I'M **FLATTERED.**
I **USED** TO WATCH YOU ON THOSE **TALK SHOWS** AFTER OUR BOOK CAME OUT AND WONDER WHY THEY DIDN'T ALSO INVITE ME. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN **SO** MUCH MORE INTERESTING, DON'T YOU THINK?
HAVE A **REAL** DISCUSSION ABOUT WHAT WE MADE TOGETHER.
I THOUGHT YOU SAID MY VOICE ISN'T WHAT YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD BE?
DID I?
Hm. MY MISTAKE.
I DO THINK YOU DID A **WONDERFUL** JOB OF CAPTURING MY WORK.
THOUGH YOU DIDN'T ALWAYS GET EVERYTHING RIGHT, THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED IN ANY CREATIVE ENDEAVOR.
LICENSE TO **POKE** AND **TWIST** AND **MOLD** THINGS SO THEY BETTER FIT SOMETHING PEOPLE CAN UNDERSTAND.

MR. QUINN--
PLEASE, SETH, CALL ME JACK.
I WON'T BE DOING THAT.


MR. QUINN, I NEED TO ASK YOU WHY YOU CHOSE YOUR VICTIMS.
I WOULDN'T CALL THEM VICTIMS, SETH, YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN THAT.

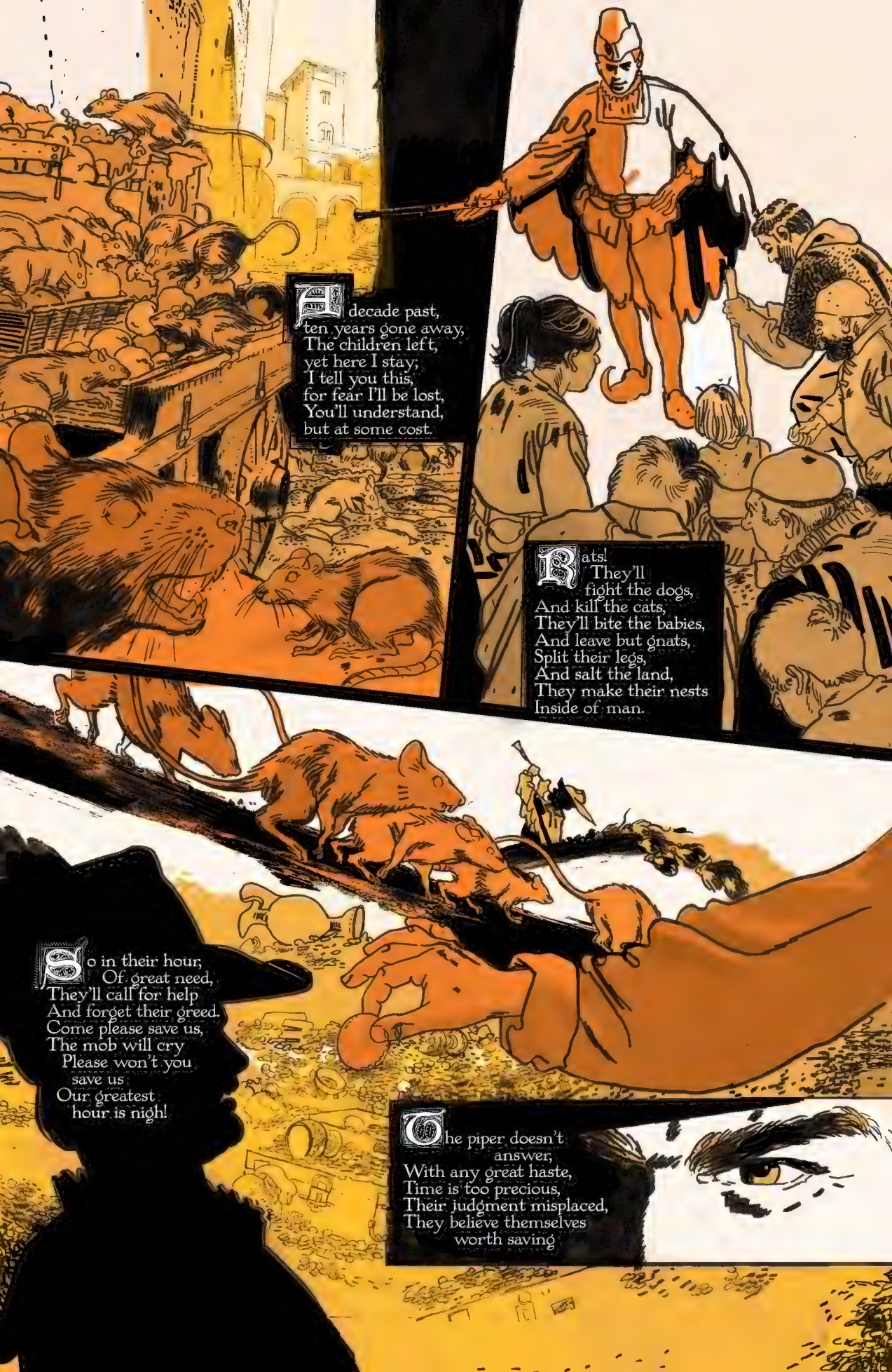
Okay.
HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE MEMBERS OF YOUR COMPANY? YOU HAD PLENTY OF POTENTIAL VIC-- MEMBERS TO CHOOSE FROM WITH ALL YOUR PROPERTIES. SO WHY THESE KIDS?


YOU'RE TRYING TO FIND A REASON WHERE THERE ISN'T ANY, SETH.
IT'S LIKE TRYING TO EXPLAIN WHAT MAKES A FAUST SUCH A PROFOUND PIECE OF THEATER OR WHY DON QUIXOTE HAS ENDURED.

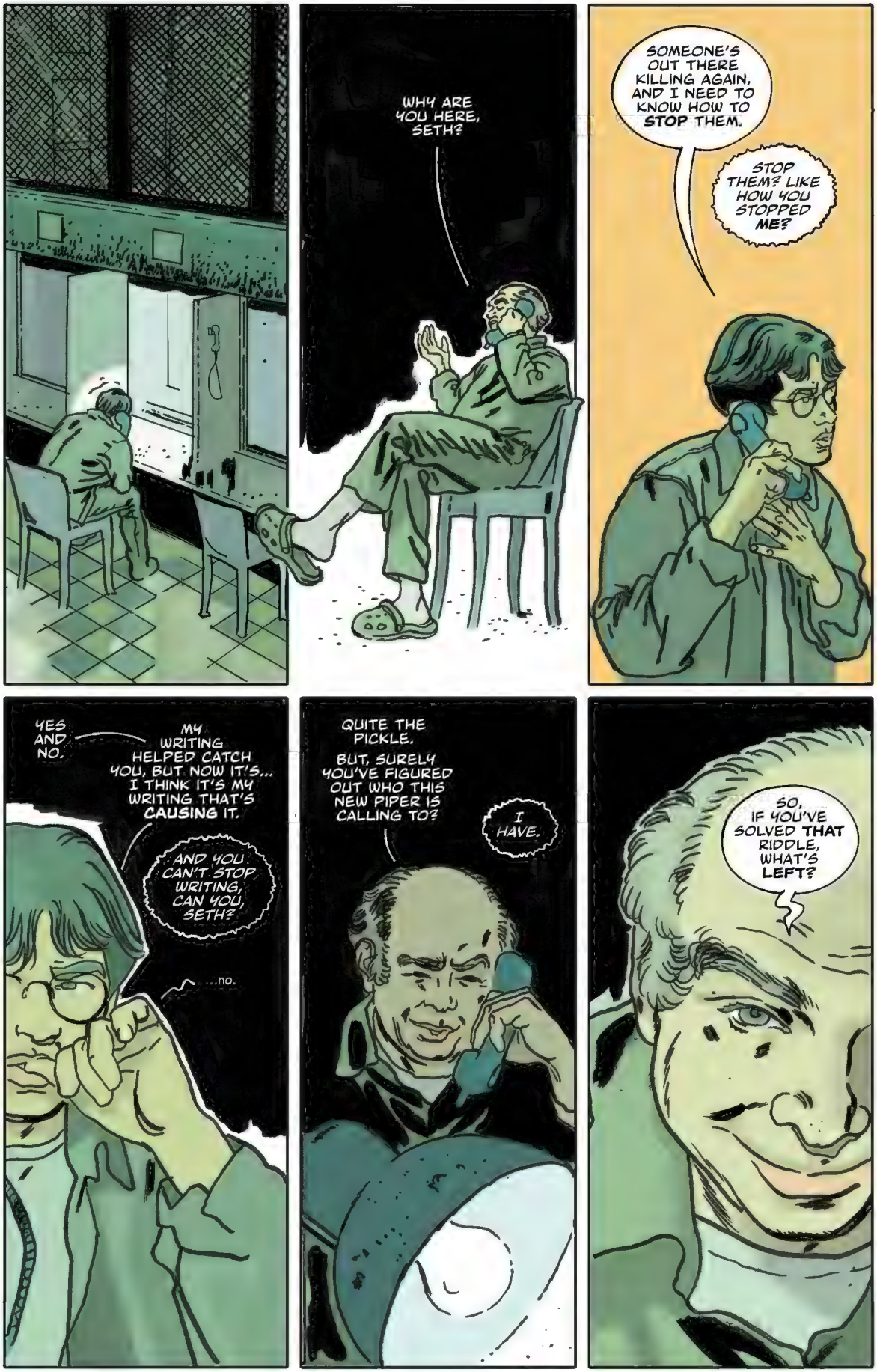

YOU CAN GROPE AROUND THE EDGES WITH ACADEMIC PLATITUDES AND IDEAS OF CRITICAL AESTHETICS, BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY--
--THEY SIMPLY ARE WHAT THEY ALWAYS WERE MEANT TO BE.

GREAT WORKS OF ART.

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK YOU WERE DOING?
A WORK OF ART?
DON'T BE GROSS, SETH, OF COURSE NOT.
LET'S PUT IT ANOTHER WAY. WHY DOES THE PAINTER PAINT? OR AN ATHLETE TRAIN? Hm?
LET'S KEEP IT SIMPLE. CLOSE TO HOME, WHY DOES THE WRITER WRITE, hm?
TO TELL A STORY.
NO.
THAT'S A BY-PRODUCT. THE AFTERMATH. NO, AGAIN, WHY DOES A WRITER WRITE?
BECAUSE THEY LIKE TO.
CLOSER! CLOSER, BUT NOT QUITE. IT IS A NICE BONUS, TO BE SURE, BUT STILL A BIT OFF THE MARK.
ONCE MORE?
BECAUSE IT'S ALL THEY KNOW HOW TO DO.
BK
GO
BUT YOU WERE A DENTIST. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO ANY OF THE THINGS YOU DID.
ALL THE SAME.
SAME AS YOU MUST CREATE, I MUST CONCLUDE. A TROUBADOUR NEEDS AN AUDIENCE, FOR WHAT IS A SONG WITHOUT SOMEONE TO HEAR IT?
THEY CALLED ME THE NURSERY RHYME KILLER, BUT I THINK THAT'S A BIT OF A MISNOMER. I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS MORE OF A FAIRY TALE. BUT WE PLAY THE ROLE WE'RE GIVEN, hm?

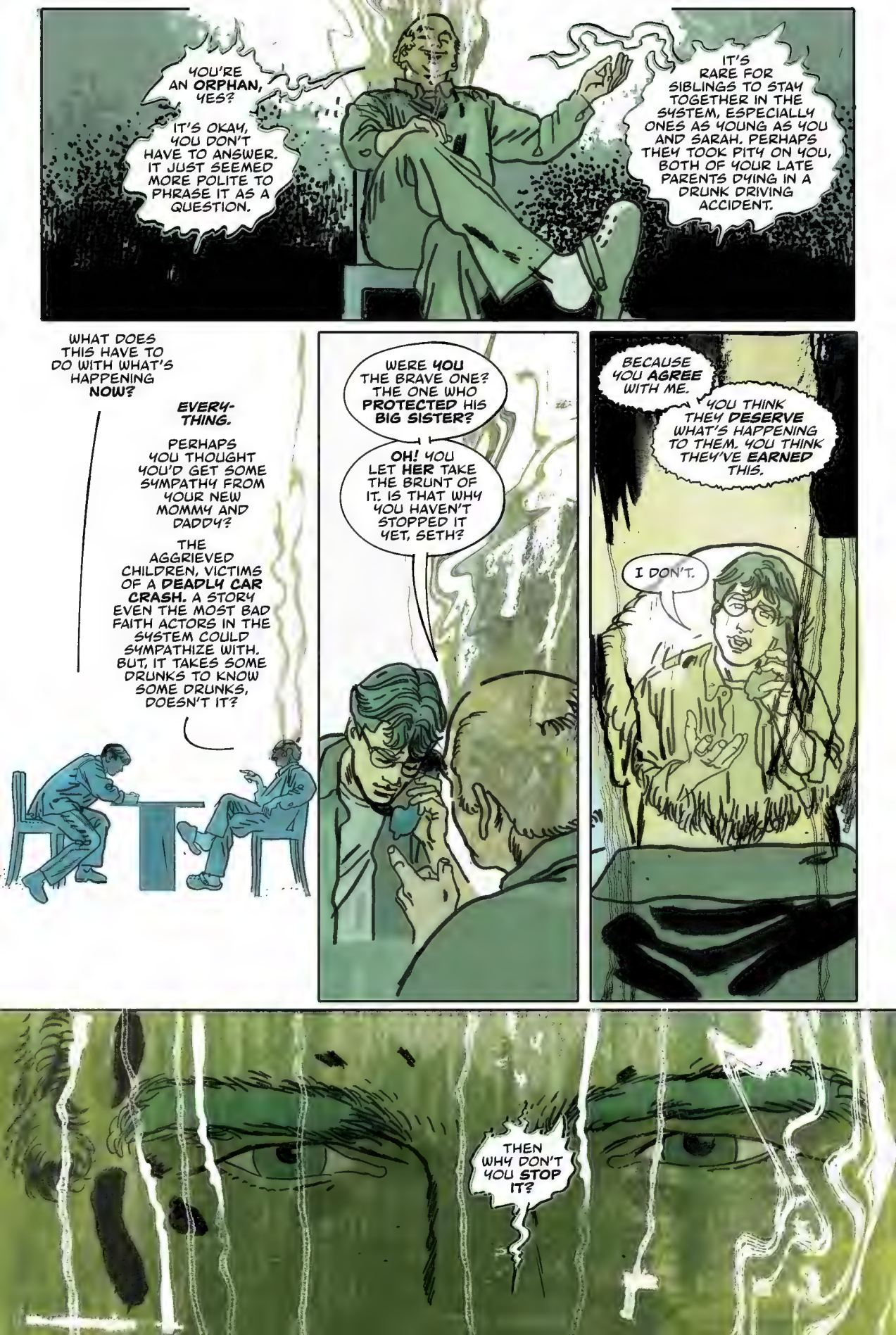

A decade past,
ten years gone away,
The children left,
yet here I stay;
I tell you this,
for fear I'll be lost,
You'll understand,
but at some cost.
Rats!
They'll
fight the dogs,
And kill the cats,
They'll bite the babies,
And leave but gnats,
Split their legs,
And salt the land,
They make their nests
Inside of man.
So in their hour,
Of great need,
They'll call for help
And forget their greed.
Come please save us,
The mob will cry
Please won't you
save us
Our greatest
hour is nigh!
The piper doesn't
answer,
With any great haste,
Time is too precious,
Their judgment misplaced,
They believe themselves
worth saving

A foolish assessment,
It's their children
who are deserving
In need of refreshment.
The things they do,
These paternal figures,
They believe themselves right
When they are what triggers
So under cover of night
I would come without notice
To sweep the children away,
To be reborn, like the lotus.
These thirteen,
Freed from the jackals
Can now live forever
Unburdened of
shackles.
So, Seth, let you
and me be wipers
Of scores out with all men–
especially this piper:
And, whether we pipe
them from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught,
let us keep our promise,
Right?


WHY ARE YOU HERE, SETH?
SOMEONE'S OUT THERE KILLING AGAIN, AND I NEED TO KNOW HOW TO STOP THEM.
STOP THEM? LIKE HOW YOU STOPPED ME?
YES AND NO.
MY WRITING HELPED CATCH YOU, BUT NOW IT'S... I THINK IT'S MY WRITING THAT'S CAUSING IT.
AND YOU CAN'T STOP WRITING, CAN YOU, SETH?
...no.
QUITE THE PICKLE.
BUT, SURELY YOU'VE FIGURED OUT WHO THIS NEW PIPER IS CALLING TO?
I HAVE.
SO, IF YOU'VE SOLVED THAT RIDDLE, WHAT'S LEFT?

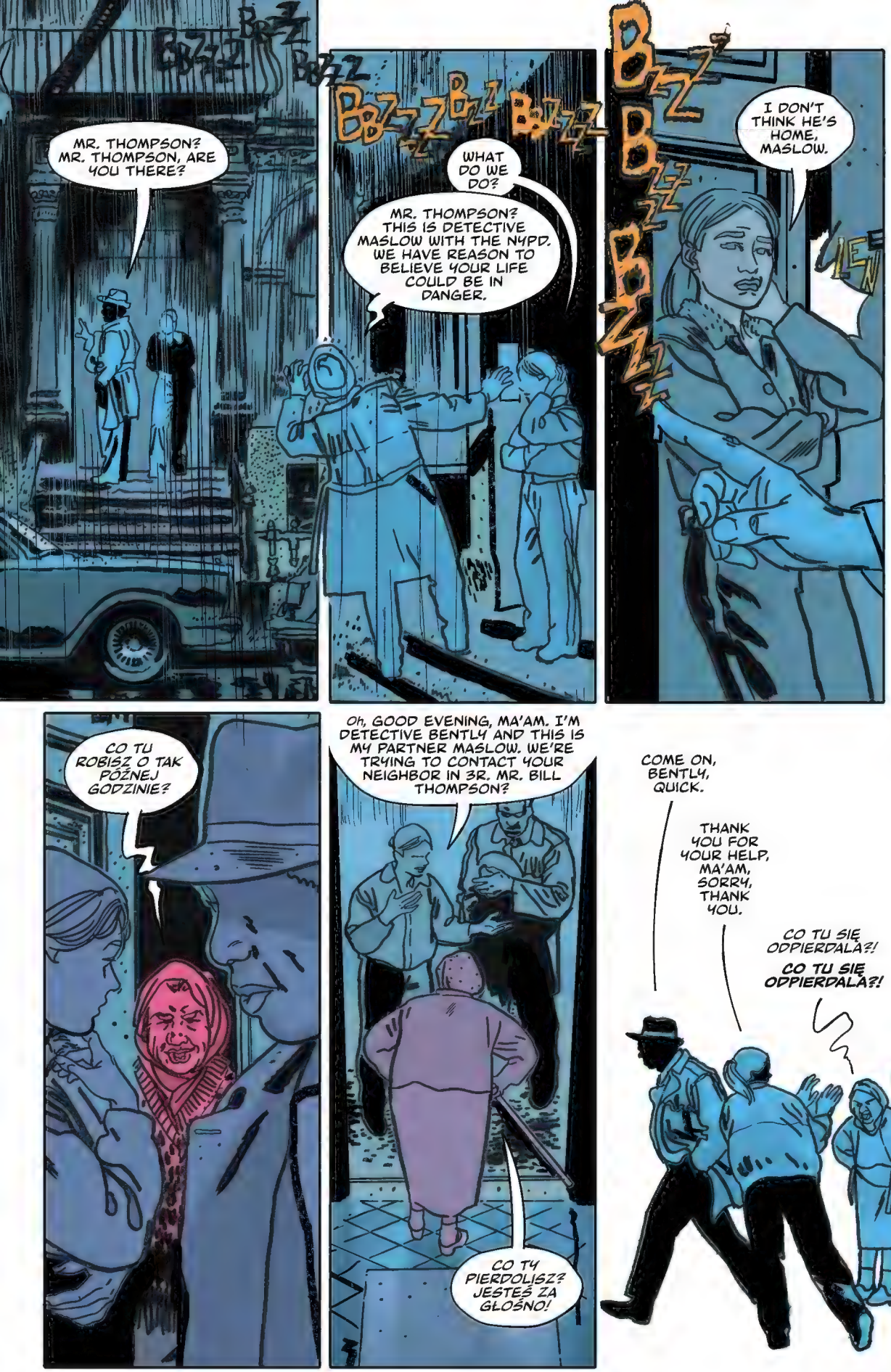
I NEEDED TO SEE YOU WITH MY OWN EYES.
NEEDED TO LOOK AT YOUR FACE AND MAKE SURE I DIDN'T SEE MYSELF LOOKING BACK.
AND?
WHAT DO YOU SEE?
I don't see anything.

I'VE TRIED TO KEEP UP WITH YOU, TOO, YOU KNOW. WHAT LITTLE THERE IS TO KEEP UP WITH.
HOW IS YOUR SISTER?
Excuse me?
SARAH, ISN'T IT?
YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT HER.
SHE HAS A BOY, TOO, RIGHT? SAMUEL. ALMOST TWELVE NOW.
BAM
DON'T YOU DARE
I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE SETH HOMS


YOU'RE AN **ORPHAN,** YES?
IT'S OKAY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER. IT JUST SEEMED MORE POLITE TO PHRASE IT AS A QUESTION.
IT'S RARE FOR SIBLINGS TO STAY TOGETHER IN THE SYSTEM, ESPECIALLY ONES AS YOUNG AS YOU AND SARAH. PERHAPS THEY TOOK PITY ON YOU, BOTH OF YOUR LATE PARENTS DYING IN A DRUNK DRIVING ACCIDENT.
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING **NOW?**
EVERY-THING.
PERHAPS YOU THOUGHT YOU'D GET SOME SYMPATHY FROM YOUR NEW MOMMY AND DADDY?
THE AGGRIEVED CHILDREN, VICTIMS OF A **DEADLY CAR CRASH.** A STORY EVEN THE MOST BAD FAITH ACTORS IN THE SYSTEM COULD SYMPATHIZE WITH. BUT, IT TAKES SOME DRUNKS TO KNOW SOME DRUNKS, DOESN'T IT?
WERE **YOU** THE BRAVE ONE? THE ONE WHO **PROTECTED** HIS **BIG SISTER?**
OH! YOU LET **HER** TAKE THE BRUNT OF IT. IS THAT WHY YOU HAVEN'T STOPPED IT YET, SETH?
BECAUSE YOU **AGREE** WITH ME.
YOU THINK THEY **DESERVE** WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM. YOU THINK THEY'VE **EARNED** THIS.
I DON'T.
THEN WHY DON'T YOU **STOP** IT?

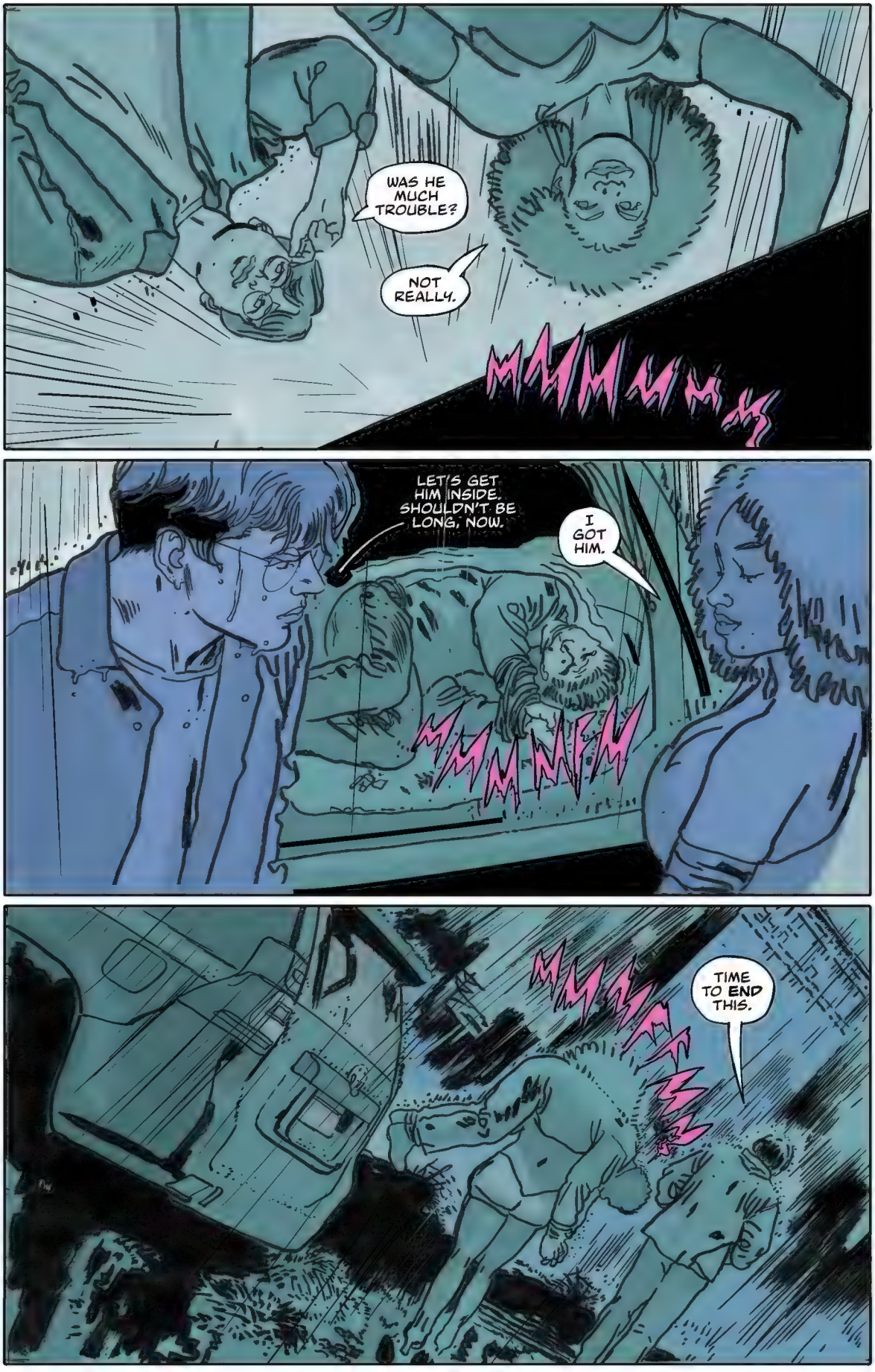
FRUSH FRUSH
BRINGGG BRINGGG
BRRR RRRR
MEMOS
HELLO?

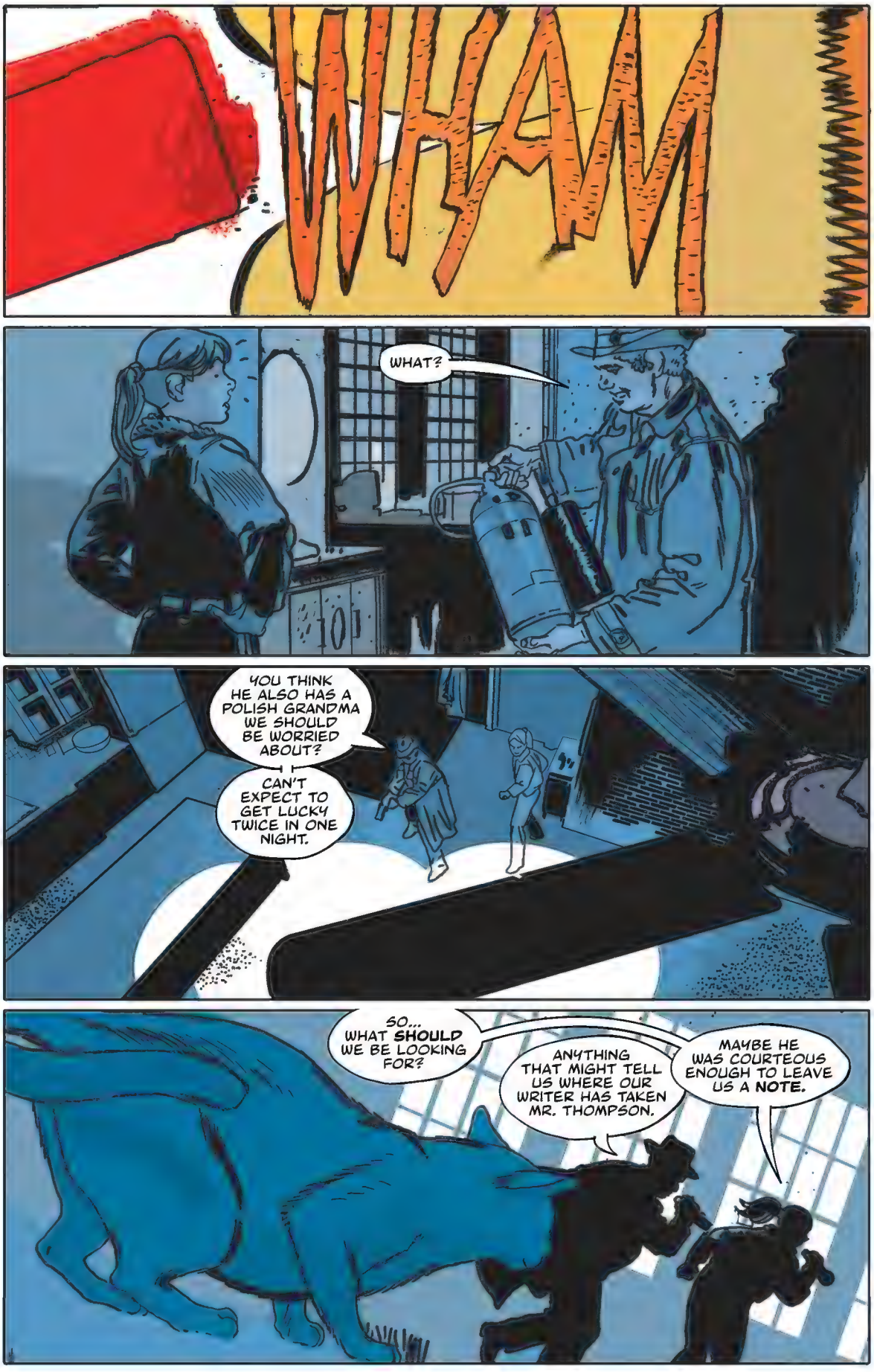
SARAH, IT'S ME.
HEY, WHAT'S UP? IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE CAR?
THE CAR-- NO, NO, THE CAR IS FINE. I JUST--
I JUST WANTED TO CALL AND SAY THANKS AGAIN. FOR LETTING ME BORROW IT.
YEAH, NO WORRIES, WEIRDO. THAT'S WHAT FAMILY'S FOR.
YEAH... yeah, of course.
...
SETH, WHERE ARE YOU? IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE CALLING ME FROM IN THE SHOWER, WHICH--
--WHILE I LOVE YOU, IS A LITTLE WEIRD.
NO, NO, I JUST--
I STOPPED TO GET GAS AND THOUGHT I'D CALL TO MAKE SURE YOU DIDN'T NEED THE CAR BACK BEFORE MORNING.
NO, IT'S ALL YOURS.
OKAY, COOL, GREAT, THANKS.
AND SETH?
YEAH?
GET OUT OF THE RAIN. YOU'RE GONNA CATCH SOMETHING.
Heh, YEAH.
I THINK I MIGHT HAVE ALREADY.


MR. THOMPSON? MR. THOMPSON, ARE YOU THERE?
BZZZ

CO TU SIĘ ODPIERDALA?!
I DON'T KNOW HOW I DIDN'T CATCH IT SOONER.
THE ORDER?
MRS. KETCHUM SHOULD HAVE KEYED ME IN IMMEDIATELY. FUCK, MAYBE I DO NEED A WRITER TO DO MY JOB FOR ME.
SO ALL THE VICTIMS ARE TIED TO VICTIMS OF THE NURSERY RHYME KILLER?
NOT JUST TIED, THEY'RE THE LAST PEOPLE WHO SAW THE CHILDREN ALIVE BEFORE NRK GOT THEM.
THEY WERE THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST THAT MONSTER. THOSE CHILDREN'S FINAL GUARDIANS.
NOW, THEY'RE BEING PUNISHED FOR THEIR FAILURES, AND IN THE SAME ORDER THOSE CHILDREN WERE LOST.
MR. THOMPSON--?
KNOCK KNOCK
KEEEE
Mr. Thompson?

APARTMENT'S CLEAR. HE'S NOT HERE, FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE.
ANY OTHER IDEAS WHERE HE COULD BE?


WAS HE MUCH TROUBLE?
NOT REALLY.
MMMMM
LET'S GET HIM INSIDE. SHOULDN'T BE LONG, NOW.
I GOT HIM.
MMMM
TIME TO END THIS.


WHAM
WHAT?
YOU THINK HE ALSO HAS A POLISH GRANDMA WE SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT?
CAN'T EXPECT TO GET LUCKY TWICE IN ONE NIGHT.
SO... WHAT **SHOULD** WE BE LOOKING FOR?
ANYTHING THAT MIGHT TELL US WHERE OUR WRITER HAS TAKEN MR. THOMPSON.
MAYBE HE WAS COURTEOUS ENOUGH TO LEAVE US A **NOTE.**

SOMEHOW I DOUBT WE'LL BE THAT LUCKY.
DOESN'T HURT TO BE OPTIMISTI--
AAAYEEEEEE
BENTLY!
NOT A POLISH GRANDMA, BUT A FEARSOME PROTECTOR ALL THE SAME.
Sigh...
WHAT'S THE MATTER, MAS, NOT A CAT PERSON?
I LIKE FISH. LOW MAINTENANCE AND EASY TO GET RID OF ONCE THE RELATIONSHIP RUNS ITS COURSE.
BENTLY...
...COME TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

The Doll took Bill Thompson back to where it all began, back to the first hunting grounds. It had strapped him to a chair on the highest floor, savoring each tightening of the rope. Every fiber and strand groaned in protest about the tension, their straining giving voice to a sound of ecstasy.

"Why are you doing this to me?" Bill Thompson tries to ask. But it all comes out as an ill defined mumble. The gag in his mouth drips a bead of saliva as a small trickle escapes the edges of Bill's lips where the seal isn't perfectly met.

The Doll gives no acknowledgment to Bill's unintelligible question. It moves around like it's preparing an operating room for surgery. Again, Bill Thompson tries to reason with this… thing.

"What are you?" Bill tries to scream, but only succeeds in pushing more spit through the sides of his gag, leaving his cheeks wet. His struggling against his binds only seems to make them tighter. He finally allows his mind to go there.

"This is where I die," Bill thinks. "Please let it be quick."

As if sensing Bill Thompson's very thoughts, The Doll turns to Thompson, its zipper-lipped mouth brandishing a smile. Its expression tells Mr. Thompson in no uncertain terms, "it won't be."

Next
MONTH...

BITTER ROOT
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THE EISNER AWARD-WINNING SERIES RETURNS! AVAILABLE NOW!

JULY AT IMAGE

I've missed the atmospheric fae-like figures of Jae Lee (*Inhumans*, *Seven Sons*), so am glad to see him and Gerry "The Captain" Duggan (*Falling in Love on the Path to Hell*, *X-Men*) together for three issues of overlapping tales in ***This Ends Tonight***. People are being murdered by the second page, and it just doesn't stop, finding the place called "too far" and then just keeps on going. It starts in a place that feels Tarantino-esque and ends in a place that's distinctly trippy.

The four-issue oversized ***The Voice Said Kill*** sees the always-ambitious Si Spurrier (*Coda*, *X-Men*) finding something smaller and beguilingly weird. It's a Bayou-set crime story which circles around a pregnant forest ranger, a moonshine matriarch and someone who I can best describe as a folk horror *First Blood*. Vanesa R. Del Rey is more familiar to this soft-under-foot terrain, and the pages sweat with the febrile horror she brought to *Redlands*. Creepy and compelling, human and humid.

Nothing makes me happier than an artist going solo. David Marquez (*Uncanny X-Men*, *Miles Morales*) does so with ***The Unchosen***, a four-part mini-series, and post-apocalyptic take on the magic school genre. A girl with enormously destructive potential must choose whether to conform, rebel or explode. This is full of the slick, dramatic storytelling of an artist in full flow, and perfect control. I'm happy, but also fearful, as, if all the artists do it, I'll be out of a job.

The purpose of these capsules is to sum up what a book is about, but e e zann and Godfarr's ***I, Tyrant***'s solicit really does sum it up: "The lives of a struggling but madly ambitious Iranian playwright (Hafez Bashee) and an Arab serpent-king from 611 A.D. (Zahhak) – once given the power to halt death in its tracks – become reticulated around a non-zero-sum game." Suffice to say, in this broody horror, the non-zero-sum game isn't a boardgame that includes some math.

Over at Skybound, the oversized first issue of ***Ghost Pepper*** drops, and Ludo Lullabi (*Transformers*, *Battle Chasers*) gives a movie on paper with real scale – there's panels here I wanted to mail to my collaborators to show how he's pulled off ULTRABIG. A stranger walks into the best little food truck in an apocalyptic sci-fi world, and things escalate quickly, with hunter-killer robots, weird prophecy, tasty food, random comedy and a lot of fun. Bring popcorn, in the largest container you can find.

Kieron Gillen writes ***The Power Fantasy***.

ISSUE 05
COVER A | TYLER BOSS

ZONE